

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /099 W
-----040577 150918Z /16

P 141635Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9945
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MADIRD
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1950

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, MR

SUBJ: COUP D'ETAT IN MAURITANIA: NOTES ON MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND
PERSONALITIES

1. KNOWLEDGEABLE FOREIGN MILITARY SOURCE PROVIDED EMBOFF
FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON HOW RECENT MAURITANIAN COUP D'ETAT
WAS CONDUCTED AND ON OFFICERS NOW PLAYING ACTIVE ROLE.

2. ORIGINS OF COUP: UNLIKE OTHER OBSERVERS WHO BELIEVE
COUP PLANNED ONLY RECENTLY, SOURCE BELIEVES PLANNING HAD IN
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FACT BEEN UNDERWAY FOR A NUMBER OF MONTHS. SOURCE OFFERED
NO SUBSTANTIATION OF THIS ASSERTION OTHER THAN OBSERVATION
THAT SO SMOOTHLY RUN AN OPERATION COULD NOT HAVE BEEN COOKED UP
AT LAST MINUTE. AS WE HAVE REPORTED EARLIER, SOURCE BELIEVED
THAT FINAL DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH COUP WAS MADE FOLLOWING
MEETING 10-15 DAYS AGO OF MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS WITH
FORMER PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH. DURING THIS GATHERING, OULD

DADDAH IS SAID TO HAVE BERATED OFFICERS FOR LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE OF MAURITANIAN ARMY AGAINST POLISARIO.

3. TROOP MOVEMENTS: SOURCE MONITORED MAURITANIAN MILITARY RADIO NET UNTIL APPROXIMATELY 2300Z JULY 9. BY THAT TIME, BECAME CLEAR THAT NOUAKCHOTT WAS RINGED BY ARMY UNITS WHICH HAD BEEN GATHERING FROM MORE DISTANT REGIONS FOR SOME TIME. SOURCE BELIEVES THAT MANY OF THESE UNITS WERE STILL IN PLACE OUTSIDE CITY AS OF JULY 12.

4. CONDUCT OF COUP C ONLY ARMY WAS INVOLVED IN PLANNING OF COUP AND KEY OBJECTIVE OF LEADERS WAS THEREFORE TO NEUTRALIZE GENDARMERIE AND NATIONAL GUARD. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, ARMY ELEMENTS REACHED GENDARMERIE COMMANDER LT. COLONEL CHEIKH OULD BOIDE'S HOME AT 0230Z JULY AND ASKED HIM AT GUN POINT WHETHER HE WISHED TO JOIN REBELS. CHEIKH APPARENTLY AGREED SINCE HE IS NOW MEMBER OF RULING MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY (CMRN). VERY SHORTLY THEREAFTER, ARMY SURROUNDED NATIONAL GUARD HEADQUARTERS. GUARD INSPECTOR (COMMANDER) MAJOR DIA AMADOU AND HIS DEPUTY BOTH AGREED TO JOIN REBELLION, AND FORMER IS ALSO MEMBER OF CMRN. SINCE NATIONAL GUARD RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFENSE OF PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE, DIA'S CHANGING SIDES ASSURED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RESISTANCE TO COUP, AND THEREAFTER THINGS PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY.

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5. GENERAL STAFF: SOURCE SAID THAT CMRN MEMBER LT. COL. HAIDALLA WAS NAMED CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF ON JULY 12. SOURCE DESCRIBED HAIDALLA AS BETTER FIELD OFFICER THAN BUREAUCRAT AND WONDERED IF LATTER WOULD BE ABLE TO PERFORM NEW TASK EFFECTIVELY. UNTIL COUP HAIDALLA WAS COMMANDER OF SECOND MILITARY REGION. HAIDALLA'S DEPUTY IS CMRN MEMBER LT. CIL. AHMED AMEDOU, COMMANDER OF SIXTH MILITARY REGION PRIOR TO COUP. CHIEF OF OPERATIONS IS CMRN MEMBER MAJOR SOUMARE SLIMANE, FORMERLY COMMANDER OF FOURTH MILITARY REGION.

6. OTHER MILITARY PERSONALITIES: SOURCE SAID THAT CAPTAIN MOHAMED OULD BOUH, FORMERLY CHIEF OF PRESIDENT'S MILITARY CABINET, IS ON RIGHT SIDE OF NEW REGIME BUT APPARENTLY WITHOUT GREAT INFLUENCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, LT. JIDDOU, FORMERLY COMMANDER OF PRESIDENT'S SECURITY AND ESCORT SQUAD, IS BELIEVED TO HAVE CONSIDERABLE STANDING IN NEW REGIME.

7. COMMENT: QUICK DECISION BY NATIONAL GUARD COMMANDERS THAT RESISTANCE TO COUP USELESS, PLUS PARTICIPATION OF LT. JIDDOU, WOULD APPEAR KEY ELEMENTS IN COUP LEADERS' ABILITY TO ATTAIN THEIR OBJECTIVES WITHOUT BLOODSHED. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT DOORS OF PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE WERE OPENED

FROM INSIDE WITHOUT ANY SORT OF CONFRONTATION.

8. FOREGOING WOULD MAKE IT APPEAR THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF MAURITANIAN ARMED FORCES, BOTH THOSE WHO ORGANIZED THE COUP AND THOSE FORCED AT GUNPOINT TO JOIN IT, MUST HAVE CONCERTED MEASURES EARLY ON JULY 10 AFTER PRESIDENT AND CABINET MEMBERS ARRESTED. DECISIONS AS TO WHICH OFFICER SHOULD BE ON CMRN WOULD SEEM TO HAVE BEEN MADE ONLY AFTER COUP WAS ENDED. THIS WOULD ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY 12 HOUR DELAY IN PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF CMRN'S COMPOSITION.

9. IN ADDITION TO RESENTMENT AT CRITICISM OF THEIR POOR PERFORMANCE, ANOTHER INDUCEMENT TO ARMY OFFICERS TO STAGE COUP MAY HAVE BEEN OULD DADDAH'S ALLEGED INTEREST IN EXTENDING
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ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN TO INCLUDE THE MILITARY. FORMER PRESIDENT IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF LAVISH VILLAS BEING CONSTRUCTED IN NOUAKCHOTT BY LEADING ARMY OFFICERS. KRYZA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, MILITARY PERSONNEL, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NOUAKC01950
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780290-0825
Format: TEL
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780759/aaaabxnn.tel
Line Count: 139
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7feb0773-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2003601
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COUP D'ETAT IN MAURITANIA: NOTES ON MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND PERSONALITIES
TAGS: PINT, MILI, MR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7feb0773-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014